



Seattle

Center of Excellence

Director: Susan C. Hedrick, PhD

Executive Summary for Fiscal Year 2008

The Northwest Center for Outcome Research in Older Adults, located at Veterans Affairs Puget Sound Health Care System in Seattle, performs state-of-the-art research, generates new knowledge and research methods, provides high caliber training in health services research, and assists VA policy makers in a rapidly changing health care environment.

The research objectives of the Center are to provide information to improve the delivery of health services to veterans and to contribute to scientific progress in the field of health services research by focusing on four emphasis areas:

- Management of Chronic Disease in Primary and Specialty Care
- Preservation of Independence in Older Adults
- Evaluation of Alternative Delivery Systems
- Basic Methodology in Health Services Research

Using the increased core funding provided by Central Office in 2008, we were able to build capacity and strengthen our ability to support new investigators. We hired a PhD level Biostatistician, Leslie Taylor, and two Master's level Biostatistician Assistants, Eric Johnson and Adam Batten, to offer comprehensive methodology and statistical support to our investigators. This increase in support was of immediate benefit to VACO when CoE staff were commissioned as a Data Validation Subgroup by VHA Office of Patient Care Services. They were tasked to evaluate the current processes used by the National Surgical Quality Improvement Program (NSQIP) in response to an Office of Inspector General report. The statistical expertise at the CoE enabled the Subgroup to be formed quickly and respond thoroughly to the request.

In February, Dr. Stephan Fihn, our Center Principal Investigator, accepted the position of Chief Quality and Performance Officer for VHA, and Dr. Susan Hedrick was appointed Acting Center Principal Investigator. Dr. Hedrick initiated a new investigator search to add to our CoE expertise in 1) care coordination, 2) development and evaluation of approaches to the care of chronically ill elderly, and 3) psychometric methodology for scale development and survey design. We are hoping to fill two to three positions in the next year.